



What we're doing at EPA

Regulating stormwater pollution

U.S. EPA | STORMWATER OUTREACH AT EPA NEW ENGLAND



STORMWATER is a leading cause of poor water quality. Rain or melted snow runs down driveways, sidewalks and streets carrying oil, dirt and other pollutants into nearby waterways. Polluted runoff, which can cause erosion and flooding, runs into waterways and degrades plants, fish, shellfish and other wildlife. In water used for recreation, the runoff can lead to illness, and people who eat contaminated fish can also become sick. Untreated stormwater can also contaminate drinking water sources.

INTRO:

The Clean Water Act, originally signed into law in 1972, protects bodies of waters used for swimming, fishing, boating, drinking water or wildlife habitat. With certain exceptions, this law requires permits for discharges to these waterways. These permits may control stormwater as well as other discharges of pollutants. Failure to control stormwater discharges can lead to fines or orders to comply with the Clean Water Act.

TO MANAGE STORMWATER AT EPA WE ARE:

Issuing permits to control discharges through the NPDES program — The Clean Water Act prohibits the discharge of any pollutant to a body of water of the United States without a National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit. Under the Clean Water Act, EPA and most states regulate industrial, construction and municipal discharges of stormwater by issuing NPDES permits. These permits have led to great improvements in the quality of New England's water and the health of our aquatic ecosystems. In Massachusetts and New Hampshire, EPA New England issues the permits and enforces the law. In Connecticut, Rhode Island, Vermont and Maine, EPA has authorized the state to issue and enforce permits and also enforces permits.

- **Permit conditions:** Stormwater permits contain conditions to meet a variety of technology requirements as well as to meet the state water quality standards designed to protect the health of the receiving waters. These conditions are typically expressed in terms of best management practices (BMPs).

- **Municipal Separate Storm Sewer (MS4s) permits:** If your town or city is in an urbanized area, it may have been issued a NPDES permit to regulate stormwater discharges from its storm sewer system. These

permits are often referred to as "MS4 permits." MS4 permits can be used to regulate discharges of stormwater from municipal operations, such as road construction and maintenance, or activities associated with development or redevelopment. The permits are used to require certain practices that are considered best for reducing the discharge of pollutants as much as possible and for protecting water quality. If you are a municipality, an industry or developer, you may be subject to regulation under a federal or state stormwater permit. Make sure you are aware of, and comply with all applicable regulations. For more information, refer to <http://cfpub.epa.gov/npdes/stormwater/swbasicinfo.cfm>

Caring for our coastline — The Coastal Nonpoint Source Pollution Control Program addresses pollution problems in oceans. It requires communities in certain coastal areas to establish runoff programs.

Fining violators — Dischargers that fail to comply with regulations for stormwater can face fines. Levying fines and issuing orders to those who violate stormwater laws are important tools that EPA may use to minimize pollutants in stormwater and to protect our environment.

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